Welcome to the first newsletter for the Fellowship and Residency Research Program (FRRP), an educational program providing residents with research skills that would motivate them to have a positive perspective and augment their efforts to develop a career in biomedical research.

The idea of the FRRP started while discussing the benefits of research on medical students. Based on the ongoing discussion, we raised the issue to the dean of the Faculty of Medicine who together with faculty members supported and welcomed the innovative idea. Laying the groundwork for our project was an exciting phase since it marked the accomplishment of our first milestone.

After the different departments in the Faculty of Medicine vastly acknowledged and applauded the designated idea, we kicked off the implementation phase by establishing the FRRP office. Residents constantly came in and out to present their inquiries and project ideas. Slowly, our office gained momentum, and the administration believed in our mission. Soon enough, we were a separate entity with its own interdependent collaborations with all the departments at the Faculty of Medicine. Our outcomes were fruitfully embodied through seven FRRP research projects published in peer reviewed journals thus elevating research at AUBMC to higher standards, keeping in mind that more projects are yet to come.

Our hope is to engage other faculties at AUB and to enhance enthusiasm and departmental collaboration. The FRRP has been a remarkable experience for all participating members. Establishing the program and reaching success year after year has proven to us that nothing is impossible. Looking back, it was a wonderful experience, and we wouldn’t have done it any differently.

Dr. Ali Taher
Dr. Hani Tamim
FRRP Directors
OVERVIEW OF THE FRRP

The FRRP has been set as a required component for all attending residents and medical fellows of the Fellowship and Residency Program at the Faculty of Medicine at AUBMC.

The FRRP is directed by Dr. Ali Taher, Associate Chair for Clinical Research, Department of Internal Medicine, and Dr. Hani Tamim, Director of the Biostatistics Unit, Clinical Research Institute.

Its main objectives are to accommodate residents who have no prior experience in research or those with previous research backgrounds and to ameliorate their research skills by carrying out a research project throughout their residency/fellowship period.

History and Progress

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<td>▪ Implemented at the Department of Internal Medicine</td>
<td>▪ Program expanded to all AUBMC departments.</td>
<td>▪ 152 residents (PGY1, 2 or 3) worked on FRRP research projects.</td>
<td>▪ 221 residents (PGY1, 2 or 3) worked on their FRRP projects.</td>
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<td>▪ 14 PGY1 categorical residents joined the program.</td>
<td>▪ 62 categorical residents joined the program.</td>
<td>▪ 14 PGY3 Internal Medicine residents graduated in the Open House ceremony</td>
<td>▪ 45 residents are to graduate from the program in the 2015 Open House ceremony.</td>
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OUR SERVICES

▪ Follow up with the residents, advisors, and representatives on weekly basis.
▪ Maintain liaison with residents to address and solve challenges facing them at each stage and keep track of their progress.
▪ Provide our residents with the necessary skills in clinical research.
▪ Guide the residents with the IRB process.
▪ Provide the residents with adequate support in statistical analysis.
▪ Assist the residents in finalizing their publications and posting them in peer reviewed journals.

OUR PROCESS

Throughout the residency period, residents are expected to conduct their own research projects and pass through the different stages of the FRRP process.

The process begins upon submitting the letter of intent followed by the proposal, gaining IRB approval, and presenting progress presentations. It ends up with a final manuscript to be published in an international peer reviewed journal.
OUR TEAM

MRS. SARA KHANSA, MBA, BSc.
Coordinator of FRRP
Tel: 01 - 350000 ext. 5776
E-mail: sk77@aub.edu.lb

HANI TAMIM, PhD
Director of FRRP
Tel: 01 - 350000 ext. 5453
E-mail: htamim@aub.edu.lb

ALI TAHER, MD, PhD, FRCP
Director of FRRP
Tel: 01 - 350000 ext. 5392
E-mail: ataher@aub.edu.lb

OUR CONNECTIONS

The FRRP, involving all the residents from the different AUBMC departments, collaborates with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Clinical Research Institute (CRI).
OPEN HOUSE 2014

The FRRP and the Faculty of Medicine at AUBMC organized their first research open house on Thursday, May 22, 2014 showcasing 14 graduating residents who presented their research.

The event was successful in recognizing the residents’ efforts by providing them with the opportunity to elaborate on the results of their collaborative research conducted under the supervision of faculty advisors. The diversified faculty research activities and their continuous growth at AUBMC were also accentuated during the event.

The Research Open House welcomed visitors from the clinical and academic fields including clinical researchers, medical students and trainees, governmental representatives, and members of research centers, universities and general public.

The diligent efforts of Drs. Ali Taher and Hani Tamim, the Internal Medicine faculty members who supervised the residents’ projects and the FRRP staff led the 1st FRRP graduation to thrive with success.
Prizes were awarded to the first group of graduating residents who participated in the Fellowship and Residency Research Program (FRRP). First prize went to Razmik Warakian, second prize to Eliane Younes, and the third to Nisrine Ghazal.

Dr. Razmik Warakian (Advisor: Dr. Farid Talih), our first prize winner.

Dr. Eliane Younes (Advisor: Dr. Hassan Chami), our second prize winner.

Dr. Nisrine Ghazal (Advisor: Dr. Ghada Fuleihan), our third prize winner.
HAPPY HOUR, DECEMBER 2014

The Fellowship and Residency Research Program (FRRP) at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) organized its third Happy Hour Event on December 17, 2014 at Casper & Gambini Med Café promoting three residents’ publications.

Raja N. Khuri Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Vice President of Medical Affairs, Dr. Mohamed Sayegh and Associate Dean for Translational and Clinical Research, Dr. Samia Khoury were two special guests who attended the event in the presence of faculty members from all clinical and academic fields, FRRP representatives, medical staff, residents, fellows and medical students.

The director of the FRRP, Dr. Ali Taher, welcomed the attending guests before Dr. Samia Khoury gave an overview of the program and its benefits for the residents.

The achievements of three residents: Iman Abou Dalle, Jessica Aoun and Tharwat el Zahran were celebrated during the ceremony. They presented their publications and shared their FRRP experience while emphasizing the significance of gaining research skills throughout the residency/fellowship period.

Dr. Mohamed Sayegh wrapped up the occasion by shedding light on the accomplishments attained by the FRRP, a new initiative to elevate research to a higher standard. A cocktail reception followed the event.
IN THE SPOTLIGHT

FRRP REPRESENTATIVE: DR. RAMI MAHFOUZ
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF PATHOLOGY AND LAB MEDICINE

Q: How do you evaluate the Fellowship and Residency Research Program?  
A: FRRP is an exciting and extremely educational program. It has delineated the necessary steps needed to reshape the concept of research among residents in an academic institution.

Q: In what way will the program enhance the residents’ research abilities?  
A: The FRRP leads residents to become more proficient investigators and authors in the future, and in turn mentor another group of junior medical students, interns, or residents.

Q: Do you have any comment/ advice for future residents?  
A: My advice to all residents is to roll up their sleeves and benefit the most from a wonderful experience and unique opportunity in their academic journey by getting enrolled in the FRRP program as early as possible.

FRRP ADVISOR: DR. ZEINA KANAFANI
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL MEDICINE

Q: Do you believe that a research experience is important for a physician who is only considering the clinical practice?  
A: Absolutely. Even if they are interested in a purely clinical practice, all physicians should acquire some research experience. Getting exposed to research might change their views, and they might start considering an academic career. On the other hand, clinicians are expected to rely on scientific evidence in the care of their patients. Therefore, they need to know how to appraise this evidence so that they can make correct decisions at the bedside.

Q: As an FRRP advisor, what are the challenges that you faced along the way?  
A: Residents can’t dedicate enough time to their projects and their IRB approvals are sometimes delayed again due to their limited time. Furthermore, there is limited access and availability of medical records. Sometimes, residents lack the enthusiasm needed to complete the work after submitting the FRRP report or after graduation.

Q: Do you think that the FRRP has enhanced the relationship between the resident and the attending physician involved in the projects?  
A: In general yes, but it really depends on the residents and their dedication to their work. When the resident is fully engaged, his relation with the attending physician strengthens, and such a relation benefits both. However, a lot of work has to be done from the faculty’s side to energize and motivate the resident.

FRRP RESIDENT: DR. MARIA RAMIA
FAMILY MEDICINE PGY4 RESIDENT

Q: How do you describe your FRRP experience?  
A: It’s a good educational experience which paved my way to learn more about research skills and statistical analysis.

Q: Do you recommend the program for the new coming residents?  
A: Of course, I do. The FRRP engages the residents with all the major aspects of research, thus exposing them to the most accurate methods involved in conducting the study and leading them to pass through each phase with minimal error.

Q: Do you think that the research experience will enhance your medical career?  
A: Definitely! A research experience gives the resident a rich perspective about the different studies conducted around the world. This helps in building personal knowledge on solid ground.
PUBLICATIONS

- Nabulsi M, Yazbeck N, Charafeddine F. Lactose-free milk for infants with acute gastroenteritis in a developing country: study protocol for a randomized controlled trial. BioMed Central Trials. (Impact factor 2.12) 2015
  Dr. Fatmeh Charafeddine, a first year Pediatrics Fellow, will be part of the 2015 Open House.

  Dr. Cleo Massad, a PGY3 Pathology and Lab Medicine Resident, will be part of the 2016 Open House.

  Dr. Mario Saab, a PGY2 Pathology and Lab Medicine Resident, will be part of the 2017 Open House.

  Dr. Jihane Abou Rahal, a PGY4 Dermatology Resident, will be part of the 2015 Open House.

  Dr. Tharwat El Zahran, a PGY3 Emergency Medicine Resident, will be part of the 2016 Open House.

  Dr. Jessica Aoun, a PGY4 Pathology and Lab Medicine Resident, will be part of the 2015 Open House.

  Dr. Iman Abou Dalle: graduated in the 2014 Open House ceremony. She is currently a fellow in the Department of Internal Medicine.

DO YOU KNOW?

- For the academic year 2014/2015, the total number of categorical residents is 221.
- The total number of advisors mentoring residents at any given time is 83.
- Every year, we have a number of publications from the FRRP among different departments.
- In 2014
  - Internal Medicine: 1 publication / 8 attempted / 6 pending
  - Dermatology: 1 publication
  - Emergency Medicine: 1 publication
  - Pathology and Lab Medicine: 3 publications
  - Pediatrics: 1 publication